



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

July 2004

Job Growth Strong but Many Remain Unemployed

Encouraged by an increase in local jobs, job seekers in Northwest Wisconsin returned to the labor market in June. The labor force increased by over 3,400 participants and most of them immediately found jobs. The better-than-average increase in employment in June comes on the heels of weak job growth in May.

The strong job growth also brought more unattached job seekers to the labor market in hopes of

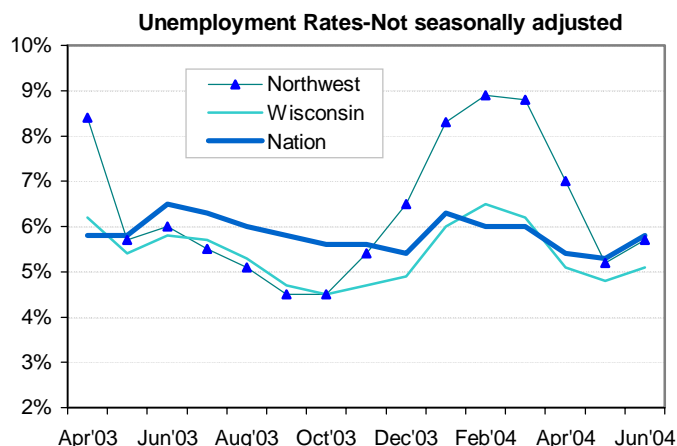
landing a job which, in turn, caused an increase in the number of unemployed in June when many of them did not find work. This increase triggered a rise in the June unemployment rate to 5.7 percent from 5.2 percent in May.

Statewide, 61 counties posted a higher unemployment rate in June including seven in Northwest Wisconsin. Three northwest counties, Bayfield, Iron and Rusk, were among the eight counties in the

state that reported lower rates in June. In Bayfield the unemployment rate dropped from 5.6 percent in May to 5.3 percent in June, in Iron the rate declined from 7.7 to 7.6 percent, and in Rusk it fell from 6.6 to 6.5 percent.

Even though many county unemployment rates rose during the month those rates are lower than one year ago. In Ashland County, with the largest 12-month decline in the region, the unemployment rate in June of 7.6 percent was much lower than the 8.9 percent rate of one year ago. In spite of the reduction, the unemployment rate in Ashland County ranked 5th highest in the state in June. Only one-third of the number of unemployed in Ashland County is filing a claim for unemployment benefits and that number declined during the month. The increase in unemployment in the county was from new job seekers entering the labor market.

Some of the northwest counties posted unemployment rates below the Wisconsin unadjusted rate in June of 5.1 percent and most were below the national rate of 5.8 percent. Seasonally adjusted, the state



	Apr '03	May '03	Jun '03	Apr '04	May '04	Jun '04
Northwest	8.4%	5.7%	6.0%	7.0%	5.2%	5.7%
Wisconsin	6.2%	5.4%	5.8%	5.1%	4.8%	5.1%
Nation	5.8%	5.8%	6.5%	5.4%	5.3%	5.8%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: June 2004

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03
Labor force	8,954	8,496	8,906	8,039	7,730	7,912	8,438	8,157	8,242	24,178	23,602	23,882	3,530	3,348	3,488
Employed	8,276	7,932	8,115	7,615	7,298	7,468	8,013	7,811	7,873	22,809	22,442	22,513	3,260	3,091	3,207
Unemployed	678	564	791	424	432	444	425	346	369	1,369	1,160	1,369	270	257	281
% unemployed	7.6	6.6	8.9	5.3	5.6	5.6	5.0	4.2	4.5	5.7	4.9	5.7	7.6	7.7	8.1

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03
Labor force	7,443	7,161	7,341	7,265	7,137	6,929	11,469	10,762	10,950	11,447	11,238	11,362	8,788	8,496	8,782
Employed	7,072	6,821	6,898	6,791	6,664	6,463	10,884	10,250	10,367	10,884	10,694	10,724	8,316	8,087	8,253
Unemployed	371	340	443	474	473	466	585	512	583	563	544	638	472	409	529
% unemployed	5.0	4.7	6.0	6.5	6.6	6.7	5.1	4.8	5.3	4.9	4.8	5.6	5.4	4.8	6.0

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - June 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03
Total Nonfarm	8.9	8.8	9.0	4.4	4.0	4.2	5.3	5.2	5.3	18.4	18.4	18.0	2.4	2.3	2.4
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.2	3.1	3.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	0.0	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.9	2.0	1.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	0.4	0.3	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	3.0	3.0	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	3.1	3.1	2.9	0.4	0.4	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03	Jun '04	May '04	Jun '03
Total Nonfarm	6.7	6.6	6.6	5.9	5.8	5.7	7.6	7.2	7.3	9.3	9.3	9.4	6.5	6.3	6.5
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.0	1.9	2.0	0.6	0.5	0.5	2.9	2.8	2.9	1.0	1.0	1.1
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	1.2	1.0	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.8
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.5
Total Government	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.5

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

rate was 5.0 percent while the national rate was 5.6 percent.

Unemployment rates around the state rose in June because there was an increase in the number of unemployed. The unemployment ranks swelled, not because employers laid off workers, but as new job seekers entered the labor market looking for work. In Northwest Wisconsin there were nearly 600 more unemployed in June, many of them students seeking summer jobs.

The number of new job seekers who found employment far outnumbered those that did not find jobs. Employment in the region soared from 91,090 in May to 93,920 in June. The increase of 2,800 workers pushed the labor force over 99,000. The increase in June of total employed reflected the increase in nonfarm jobs posted last month by local employers.

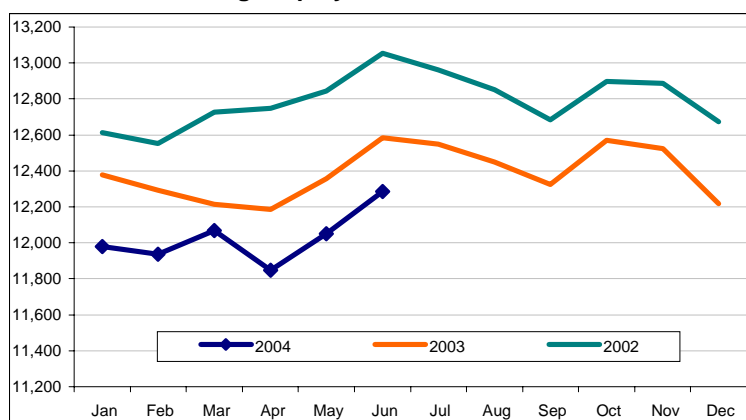
Local employers added 1,400 more jobs in June. That in-

creases the total number of jobs added in May and June to over 3,900 and is the best, late-Spring, job growth posted in the northwest area since the late 1990s.

Most of those openings (40%) have been in seasonal jobs with leisure and hospitality employers, and a quarter of them were with construction employers. Employment with wholesale and retail trade employers, also seasonally triggered, increased by 400 since April.

Manufacturing employment in the Wisconsin is rebounding but North-

Manufacturing Employment in Northwest Wisconsin



west Wisconsin employers are lagging that trend. Manufacturers from all ten counties did add jobs in June but the region's total number of 12,300 manufacturing jobs is still 300 fewer than just one year ago.



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